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# Stitching Memories

# FROM THE HEART

## Stitching together memories



In memory of Bat Chen Shaluk, 11, by Shoshana Ben

By CAROL SORIS

**F**or most Israeli, Passa is one of the most joyful holidays of the year. For Marilyn Rabinov of Hod Hasharon though, it's a day of bitter remembrance. On the eve of Purim, 1998, Marilyn's mother Sylvia Ben-Zion and her sister Gal Tefkin were killed when a suicide bomber detonated his explosive belt at the intersection of Dizengoff and King George Street in Tel Aviv. They had been on their way to buy a wedding dress for Gal's daughter, who was about to be married.

Three other, non-children, non-international, were also killed in the explosion. Ironically, the five youngsters who lost their lives were in gay holiday costumes.

Every year since, a memorial service has been at the site of the tragedy in honor of the victims of the Dizengoff terrorist attack, attended by Tel Aviv's mayor, chief rabbis and friends and relatives of those who had been killed.

For Marilyn, though, that service wasn't quite enough. "I felt that the ceremony, for all its dignity, lacked focus or awe," she says. "The steel memorial plaque is just a recognition of their names. Something more profound was needed."

So Marilyn, an expert quilter, together with members of the Accord



In memory of Itzhak Levi, 12 1/2, by Marilyn Rabinov

Quilters Guild, has created the Dizengoff Memorial Quilt as a tribute to the 13 people killed.

MEMORIAL quilts have been created in other parts of the world because they are a way to personalize those who have been lost. In the US, for example, quilts commemorate victims of 9/11 and AIDS.

Marilyn has a passion for quilting, which she says is a skill increasingly popular in Israel. She has created two "mourning" quilts, as well as a number of wall hangings and baby quilts.

"Memorial quilts portray the lives and dreams of people whose lives have been lost," she says. "They become real people rather than statistics. The quilt also speaks out for other victims of terror everywhere."

THE Dizengoff Memorial Quilt is made up of 13 individual donation panels. Each one tells something about the life of each victim as well as something about the events of that day.

While each panel is a separate unit, they are linked, Marilyn explains, "because although each person was an individual in his or her own right, they were bound together by the tragedy. Family members and friends were grouped together, with the spaces between each panel representing the spaces left in the lives of family and friends."



Although Purim  
is one of the most  
joyous holidays,  
for these  
families,  
it is also  
a day of bitter  
remembrance

In memory of Diana Guterman,  
34, by Shoshana Ron

"In addition, the Purim mask with a tear of blood is used as a graphic statement about the timing of the attack."

The quilt is suspended in a free-standing aluminum frame, so that front and back can both be seen. This is because many of the individual panels carry a narrative on the reverse side as well.

The quilters were Zeta Strahovets-Klein, who made panels for Iritsar Atia, Yossef Levi and Rachel Sela; Shoshana Ron, who made panels for Hadass Dots, Bat-Chen Shohak and Dana Guterman; Kamasa Bachmann, who made the panel for Leah Mizrahi; Terry Mowczowski created panels for Sylvia Bernstein, Gail Belkin and Tali Gordon; Tamara Pardo made panels for Anaf Woko and Daria Tversky, while Marlyn made the panel for Ruti Zaharon.



In memory of Iritsar Atia, 22, by Zeta Klein

TERRY Mowczowski said of the panel she stitched in honor of Gail, "Gail's husband wrote a poem about her in which he spoke of two trees with intertwined roots and this is the aspect I focused on in the panel. It shows a faded picture of Gail between two trees, one of which is cut off in its growth."

Gail was born in Zimbabwe and came to Israel from South Africa in 1987. A beautician, she had only been married for a year to her second husband.

Terry also quilted the section dedicated to Sylvia Bernstein, a glamorous grandmother who came to Israel in 1994. She was an active

volunteer who taught English at a local high school, which now presents an annual student volunteer prize in her name. Her panel shows some of her interests—music, beads, flowers of Southern Africa, a magnet David.

TALI Gordon, 24 and her friend Iritsar Atia, 22, had been on Dizengoff St together. Tali was born in South Africa and came to Israel with her family at age 6. She was a student at Tel Aviv University, and her panel shows her name in crushed stone along with butterflies depicted as a counterpoint to show her spirit.

Iritsar, a student of literature at TAU and an outstanding soldier during her IDF service, loved ballet and motorcycles. Her panel is half in pink and purple to represent her feminine side, and half in dark, earthy colors to represent her fondness for motorcycles. A photograph shows Iritsar in the hat she customarily wore.

RACHEL Sela, 83, was drafted into the Hagana after finishing school. Her husband Moshe was a pioneer in Israel's printing trade and she worked for years as secretary of the Absorption department of the Labor Party and for the Israel Citrus Board. Very involved in Tel Aviv cultural, political and social life, she had made the home she had lived in for 40 years. Her panel incorporates a depiction of some of the things that meant a great deal to her, including Armenian ceramics, music and Chinese porcelain.

*'This memorial quilt portrays the lives and dreams of 16 people whose lives have been lost. They become real people rather than statistics.'*



In memory of Leah Mirzahi, 39, by Ravenna Sachinam

**FIVE youngsters died.**

**Yoram Levi** was only 12 when he was killed. He was a fine student, popular with his peers and always willing to help and inspire others. His panel features the biblical quotation "Love thy neighbor as thyself," along with a picture of him full of life and a patch from his soccer shirt.

Three friends, **Dana Guterman**, 14, **Bat-Chen Shubak**, 15 and **Hadass Dross**, 14, came together from Tel Aviv to Tel Aviv to celebrate Yoram. Dana's panel was inspired by a page in her school daily planner, filled with pink hearts. The panel back displays pages taken from a book of memorial messages from friends. Bat-Chen, an active member of Scouts, was memorialized by themes from her drawings, particularly the bat-chen flower for which she was named. The Hebrew

inscription reads of Haman's end (the end of the book), which she had written at the diary's end. Hadass' panel, by Snidamit Ben, symbolized the summer sun, the costume she was wearing that day. It also has designs from her baby blankets, hair and foot photos of her as a baby, her youth club identification card and one of her drawings.



In memory of Gal Bekin, 47, by Terry Mousazadeh

**Kobi Zaharon**, 13, died a month before his bar mitzva. He loved animals and was an outstanding student. His panel bears animal pictures, a picture he had painted at age 7, his pet dog, an iguana and a white dove, which Kobi found the day before his death.

**ASAF Waks**, 21, was killed on his first day after finishing his IDF service in the Givati Brigade, where he was named an outstanding soldier. He was a gifted student and soccer player. His panel, created by Yoram Pardo, features regimental IDF badges and a star.

**Dani Tversky**, 38, was born in Tel Aviv and was a journalist with Haaretz newspaper. His panel shows books and newspaper clippings.

Finally, the panel of **Leah Mirzahi**, 59, who was devoted to her family, was sewn by Ravenna Sachinam, who said, "I decided that the central theme for her quilt should be her love of cooking and family and I designed a festive dinner table set with 13 empty chairs. The back of the panel has a Purim theme."